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August 9, 1971

Memorandum to Members

FROM: David Rockefeller

RE: Questions concerning the appointment of William P. Bundy as  
Editor of Foreign Affairs

There have been some recent developments in connection with the appointment of William P. Bundy as Editor of Foreign Affairs which I feel are of sufficient importance to bring to the attention of the membership of the Council.

Mr. Bundy's appointment, which was announced last March, was the culmination of an effort that began in the fall of 1969 after Hamilton Fish Armstrong announced his intention to retire following the publication of the 50th Anniversary issue of October 1972. John McCloy, then Chairman of the Board, appointed a committee composed of five Board members (Hamilton Fish Armstrong, Caryl Haskins, Joseph Johnson, Grayson Kirk and Bill Moyers) to begin the search for Mr. Armstrong's successor. The committee met during the fall of 1969 and the winter of 1970 and narrowed the choice of possible successors from a large number of names to six, including Mr. Bundy. When in June of 1970 George Franklin announced his intention to resign as Executive Director of the Council, a new committee of the Board, including Hamilton Fish Armstrong, Hedley Donovan, Douglas Dillon, Gabriel Hauge, Grayson Kirk, John McCloy, Bill Moyers, Alfred Neal, Robert Roosa and myself, was appointed by Mr. McCloy to seek Mr. Franklin's successor. During this effort, which lasted from July 1970 until the election of Bayless Manning by the Board last April 19th, more than 400 Council members and also the senior Council staff were solicited for their views and more than 150 names were considered. Many of those put forward were also con-



sidered for the editorship of Foreign Affairs.

On the basis of the endorsements received and their own independent investigations, the committee selected Mr. Bundy for the editorship and asked me to ascertain whether he would be willing to accept if the Board approved his nomination. I was delighted when he told me that he would, and accordingly his appointment was approved at the Board meeting on February 3, 1971.

Four members of the Council -- Richard Falk, Professor of International Law and Practice at Princeton; Richard Barnet, Co-Director of the Institute for Political Studies in Washington; Ronald Steel, author; and Richard Ullman, Professor of Political and International Affairs and Associate Dean, Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs at Princeton -- have raised strong objection to Mr. Bundy's appointment. According to Professor Falk, his principal objection is that:

"Mr. Bundy's role in planning and executing illegal and criminal war policies in Indochina should disqualify him, at least for a period of years, from holding an editorial position of this kind. To reward a former governmental official who was deceitful toward the public and Congress in this way is to undermine all notions of bureaucratic accountability and directly contradicts the entire Nuremberg tradition that the United States did so much to evolve."

Professor Falk goes on to indicate his feeling that Council members are entitled to know:

"...why the Board feels that Mr. Bundy's involvement in escalating the war by deceitful and illegal means is not a decisive obstacle to his appointment as an 'effective' Editor of Foreign Affairs. (I [Falk] cannot, for instance, imagine anyone who shares our view of the Indochina War being willing to entrust his manuscript to Mr. Bundy's editorship and, in this sense, I cannot find any basis for even believing, regardless of how Mr. Bundy performs, that Foreign Affairs will exhibit the full range of serious opinion on issues of foreign policy; if you wish to shut out this full range, then I can think of no more effective way to do this than by the appointment of Mr. Bundy, but such a result purports to be the opposite of the stated policies of the Council.)

"...since our meeting of June 3rd the Pentagon Papers have been published and document very fully Mr. Bundy's central role in carrying the war to North Vietnam in the 1964-65 period. Nowhere in Mr. Bundy's policy memoranda does he exhibit the slightest sensitivity to legal constraints on American foreign policy, even those of treaty or constitutional status. There is no longer any reason-



able ambiguity about the concerns we expressed about Mr. Bundy's qualifications. I would have thought that these disclosures would put the issue in an entirely new light, or rather, I would have hoped that this would have been the case."

Members of the Board met on two occasions with representatives of the group objecting to Mr. Bundy's appointment; and the subject was discussed at length at the Board's regular meeting on June 9th and at a special Board meeting on July 22nd. In addition, a number of Directors met on several occasions to consider the matter; and they have also consulted with numerous Council members, academic and non-academic, representing a wide spectrum of views.

Among those consulted were a number of individuals who are unusually competent to assess Mr. Bundy's qualifications and suitability for the position of Editor of Foreign Affairs. In commenting on the appointment, George W. Ball, Under Secretary of State, 1961 to 1966, to whom Mr. Bundy as Assistant Secretary reported, observed that:

"Bill Bundy is a man of intellect, perception, experience, fair-mindedness and character who would, without the slightest doubt, carry on the distinguished tradition Ham Armstrong has so brilliantly established. That he and I have disagreed on fundamental assumptions regarding the Vietnam war in no way diminishes my respect for him. I know the tasks he was assigned and the tight frame of reference within which he was operating, and I can assure you that the Pentagon papers so far published have given a distorted and quite unfair impression of the nature of his role in the whole lamentable business."

Mr. Ball goes on to express his belief that the appointment of Mr. Bundy would not at all prejudice the ability of Foreign Affairs to attract contributions from a wide spectrum of opinion.

Of particular interest also are the comments of Lucian W. Pye, Professor of Political Science at MIT, where Mr. Bundy is currently engaged as a Senior Research Associate. Professor Pye observes that:

"I am sure that at the Board meeting [June 9th] many people spoke up about the sterling personal characteristics of Bill Bundy. I only regret that I was not there because I believe that I am possibly the only person who could have testified about how Bundy's professionalism in the academic setting has in the last two years completely disarmed all of those who were initially prone to be critical of Bill because of their assumptions about his role in the Vietnam policy."



Professor Pye went on to note that "when Bill came to M.I.T. there were, particularly among some of the students, those who expressed much the same sentiments" as Professor Falk and his colleagues had expressed. Quoting Professor Pye further:

"Within a year's time, however, as students and the faculty got to know Bill, and saw how open and honest he is and how willing to discuss all matters, the attitude did change and those who were most hostile have come to admire him.

"I have every confidence that we will see that the same thing will happen at the Council after he becomes editor of Foreign Affairs."

While the Board recognizes the sincerity of the views of Messrs. Falk, Barnet, Steel and Ullman and their concern for the well-being of the Council, all Directors agreed on Mr. Bundy's personal integrity and his ability both to edit Foreign Affairs with the same high standards of skill, objectivity and independence which have been its tradition for the past fifty years under the distinguished leadership of Mr. Armstrong and to continue its hospitality to divergent and representative views of foreign policy. Accordingly, having carefully considered and reconsidered the arguments advanced by the group, the Board reaffirmed with confidence its decision to appoint Mr. Bundy.

Let me emphasize that this conclusion was reached despite the fact that many members of the Board, as well as many other members of the Council who support the appointment, have disagreed in varying degree with the wisdom of United States Vietnam policy. Mr. Bundy was not selected because of his views on the Vietnam war, nor was Bayless Manning selected as President because he was an opponent of the government's Vietnam policy. The Board hopes that both will be judged by the manner in which they carry out their duties at the Council rather than by their individual views and actions on any particular issue, no matter how important, which has arisen or may arise in regard to the conduct of foreign policy.

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In presenting their protest about Mr. Bundy's appointment, Messrs. Falk, Barnet, Steel and Ullman expressed concern about the procedures of the Council for making

important appointments to the Senior Staff and for the election of Directors.

They asked that if the appointment of Mr. Bundy were not rescinded, the Council either hold a meeting of the members to discuss the appointment or else submit it to a referendum of the members. The Board believes that either procedure would be inappropriate and, in fact, that if this kind of procedure were followed, it would sharply limit the availability of otherwise desirable candidates for the top Council posts.

In connection with the search for a new President and a new Editor of Foreign Affairs, broad segments of the membership were consulted, and each of the many suggestions which resulted was considered carefully by the Search Committee before recommendations were made to the Board. Nonetheless, it may well be that the group's suggestions (and any of your own as well) concerning procedures regarding future staff appointments and the election of Directors will prove to be helpful in improving the functioning of the Council. I know that Bayless Manning shares my conviction that everything possible consistent with orderly administration should be done to make sure that the Council's procedures are open and responsive to the general will of the members.